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681 *Ling ch'ih sui kua* (凌遲碎剮), to hack in pieces. This punishment was, prior to the Revolution, inflicted on both men and women, usually for the murder of a parent or a husband. The criminal was tied to a stake at the crossing of two streets or on the execution ground; first the skin of the brow was cut and pulled over the eyes; then the nose, lips, ears, hands, arms, were taken from the body, then the sword pierced through the heart and the body was hewn in pieces. Formerly the flesh was roasted and the fat used to light the four gates of the city, the flesh and the bones cremated and the ashes scattered to the four winds. This punishment required the sanction of a senior officer, as it mutilated the body.

Beheading, *ta p'i* (大辟), is the utmost penalty of the law and the one most dreaded by the Chinese, who all shrink from the idea of becoming a headless ghost. To such an extent is this feared that a head is often sewn on immediately after execution unless it has to be exposed in the person's native village, *ksiao shou* (梟首). The executioner is sometimes bribed to leave a part of the neck unsevered. All such punishments must be sanctioned by the superior officers before they can be carried out. Therefore the whole case has to go through a great many different phases before the execution can take place. Such are as follows:

681 696 *K'ao wên* (考問), to investigate the case and obtain the person's own confession of guilt. Unfortunately this is very often got by torture. After the magistrate has obtained what he thinks sufficient evidence he must notify his superior officer, *hsiang ping* (詳稟), by an official dispatch, giving all details, after which the superior officer sends a deputy to investigate the confession, *ch'ing k'ou kung* (清口供). Much depends upon this man; if not well treated by the district magistrate he might get him into trouble by reporting unfavorably of his judgment. After the criminal has acknowledged his guilt (落供), *lo kung*, he has to dip his thumb in ink and make an impression on the official document.

The criminals hold a feast, *fên li chiu* (分離酒), just before midwinter, which is the general time for executions as

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at this season the death principle reigns throughout nature. This is a farewell feast to those about to die.

Shang chüeh liao shou chou (上腳鐐手肘) is to put in fetters, hands and feet. As soon as the deputy has confirmed the district magistrate's sentence of death the criminal is chained, hands and feet.

The warrant of death is an official dispatch through which a nail is driven and bent, *ting fêng* (釘封), and sealed. There is also a black tablet sent along with the warrant, which is carried into the gaol when the prisoners are taken out. This is called the *hei p'ai* (黑牌). Whenever the warrant arrives the yamen runners make a raid on the rope-makers for ropes to bind the prisoners, paying nothing; for days before an execution the rope-dealers display few, if any ropes, for fear they will be seized.

When the warrant arrives the official orders wine and food to be set before the doomed men. Sometimes abundance of wine and pork is supplied, at others, only a limited amount. Some drink themselves quite drunk and others only reach the tipsy stage.

Then the hands are bound behind the back and ropes put on the neck, and the tallies are stuck in the band of the criminal's lower garment at the back. These tallies are strips of bamboo a few feet in length and a few inches wide, on which are written the doomed man's name and crime. The characters are written with ink which has been mixed with tea. No teacher likes to use tea in mixing his ink as it is reckoned unlucky.

The fetters are knocked from the hands and feet. This is done by a blacksmith in the roughest way.

The assistant executioner, *t'i shou* (替手), holds the sword in front of the doomed man's face while the real executioner stands at the back to do his work.

The *kuei tzŭ shou* (劊子手), or executioner, belongs to the military yamen. His pay used to be 800 cash per head.

It is the duty of the military official, whose men do the work of execution, to witness it, *chien chan* (監斬).

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681 The district magistrate goes to the temple, burns incense
696 and makes a declaration to the city god that he has not had these men beheaded for any personal spite or selfish ends, but simply because of their own evil deeds. Returning to his yamen, a heap of straw with crackers is set fire to at the entrance, through which he is carried at a furious pace, *kuo huo yen shan* (過火焰山) (passing the flame-hill), for fear any of the disembodied spirits of the men should have followed him. Many of these men vow before death that after death their chief work will be to kill the official. Hence these past months, during the rebellion, it was said that the soldiers of Hades were moving to help them, *yin ping tung liao* (陰兵動了). The people burned straw sandals by the thousand as an offering to these spirits.

After the executions are over the yamen runners arm themselves with clubs and go round and round the yamen, *p'an ya* (盤衙), and enter the official's private quarters, flourishing these clubs to drive away the evil spirits. They make their obeisance to the official, who in turn gives them a present.

Those remaining in gaol after the midwinter executions, as most probably they may live another year, have a feast together, *t'uan yüan chiu* (團圓酒).

If only one person should be left in the government prison, he may be strangled in prison, *chien hou chiao* (監候絞).

IV. *Torture, K'ao ta hsing* (拷打刑).

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Kuei t'ai ho (跪抬盒), to kneel in the carrying box. This instrument of torture takes its name from the box frame in which presents are carried from one place to another with one pole between two men. The prisoner is made to kneel in this box, sometimes on ashes, sometimes on broken glass or iron chains. A heavy weight is then placed upon the legs, pressing the knees down into the ashes. The hands are passed through the holes on either side and wedged in